

# CITY OF PEABODY

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### PEABODY - BACKGROUND

Peabody is located 18 miles north of Boston, at the junctions of Route 128, Route 1 and I-95. Current population is 45,838. Peabody, originally known as South Danvers, was incorporated as a Town in 1868 and became a City in 1916. The City is named for native son George Peabody, an early 19th century financier and philanthropist, who founded the banking house of J. P. Morgan.

In the late 19th century, the City became one of the largest leather producing centers in the country, supplying shoe leather to manufacturers in nearby Lynn and throughout New England. By 1919, the leather industry reached its peak in the City with over 100 firms and 8000 workers. The A. C. Lawrence Company was the largest tannery with approximately 3000 workers.

After World War II, the leather industry in Peabody, along with shoes and textiles in New England, went into a steep decline as manufacturers moved plants into cheaper labor markets in the South or overseas. The City obviously felt the economic loss of its mainstay industry. Today, there are nine tanneries and only a handful of leather finishers left in the City accounting for a total of 800 jobs out of an employment base of 24,000.

Like many New England cities, leather left its mark on the City by bringing in a multitude of ethnic groups (Greeks, Irish, Poles, Portuguese, Armenian, Chinese, Spanish-Speaking) whose descendants remain settled in its downtown neighborhoods.

The construction of Route 128 in the 1950's bisected Peabody and provided the highway access that stimulated suburban residential and commercial development. The North Shore Shopping Center, one of the largest retail malls in New England, was constructed in 1957 and renovated as an indoor mall in 1978. The suburbanization of Peabody in the 1960's and 1970's also shifted the City's employment makeup from manufacturing to service and retail jobs.



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CENTENNIAL PARK AT PEABODY

The need to expand the City's tax base and provide employment opportunities for the blue collar labor force left behind by the tanneries stimulated public action to create a new industrial park in Peabody.

The Peabody Redevelopment Authority was established by the City and the Commonwealth in 1967 under the State's Urban Renewal Statutes (C. 121B). In 1969, a site was selected for the park and an urban renewal plan adopted. The site was relatively vacant because of the steep slopes, bedrock, and surface rock. The entire 307 acre parcel was held by 56 separate land owners and was the location of piggeries and junk yards, truly a blighted area. \*

Because of the large number of owners, land assembly took five years and cost the City 1.4 million dollars. (Costs could go higher as several land damage suits are pending). This delay, and other problems with the Peabody Redevelopment Authority, led the City to assume control of the Park in 1977 through a reorganized Community Development Authority.

In 1978, 3 million dollars in roadway, sewer and water line construction began, still without the benefit of a tenant or land sale. This work was funded with City bond proceeds and a 2.2 million dollar Economic Development Administration Grant.

Finally in late 1979, ten years after the initiation of the Park, the City had its first land sale. Cordell Engineering, a manufacturer of photographing processing equipment from Everett, purchased an 8.4 acre parcel and constructed a 40,000 square foot manufacturing facility.

While the City was concluding negotiations with Cordell, the Hunneman Company of Boston, hired by the City to market Centennial, brought the S. S. Pierce Company of Woburn and the Analogic Company of Wakefield to Peabody to meet Mayor Peter Torigian and show them the Park's potential.

Thus began an eighteen month negotiation process between S. S. Pierce, Analogic and the Mayor, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Governor's Office and the Massachusetts Department of Public Works that concluded in a 10 million dollar UDAG award (the largest of any small city in the country); state commitment of a highway interchange from 128; and a combined corporate commitment to construct a million square feet of office, manufacturing and distribution space that would mean thousands of new jobs to the City. Says Mayor Torigian:

"Without the UDAG grant, the highway interchange, and the City's commitment to spend 9 million in local funds for infrastructure, Centennial Park would still be a pile of rocks. It has been a classic case of how the public sector can work to create something that private developers just couldn't have pulled off."



S. S. Pierce received a 1.5 million dollar UDAG loan: Analogic an 8.5 Million dollar UDAG. These government funded, low interest loans were used by both companies to write down the very expensive blasting, grading and filling that Centennial Park's terrain required.

F. Michael DiGiano, Chairman of the Peabody Community Development Authority, and charged with overseeing the day-to-day development of Centennial Park says

"The low interest UDAG loans served to subsidize the very high site development costs that these companies were looking at. The UDAG's allowed an economically distressed city like Peabody compete with more affluent communities along Route 128 that had more attractive, less costly industrial sites."

Pierce completed their 193,000 square feet office and distribution center in June of 1982. Analogic completed the first 200,000 square feet of a 600,000 square foot manufacturing complex in March of 1983. The company plans to begin construction of a second 200,000 square foot building this Spring. Together these companies have brought with them over 1200 new jobs. Analogic plans to add another 4000 jobs over a five year period if business trends remain strong.

The attraction of these two well known New England firms provided the boost that the City's marketing effort needed. Within the next three years, the City sold out its entire 300 acre park generating 3.9 million dollars in land sale revenues. Peabody became the host community to over 20 new firms and tenants who are constructing over 2.1 million square feet of new office and industrial space and providing 6000 jobs to the North Shore. Another 4.9 million dollars in HUD UDAG grants were received by the City to finance new developments by Daly Pharmaceutical, Avnet, Inc. of Woburn and Combined Properties, of Malden. Mayor Torigian points out that the 15 million in UDAG funds will result in over \$25 million in repayments that will be used by his administration as a revolving loan pool to further stimulate economic development and housing construction in the City. Says Mayor Torigian:

"Not only has Centennial Park renewed our industrial base, but the UDAG repayments from these new industries will serve to finance redevelopment in our downtown that was devastated when the tanneries left. I think that the Park has far surpassed anybody's expectation in terms of meeting our goals of broadened tax and job base. We were willing to take the risks with the land assembly and the investment in roads and utilities before we had tenants. I think our investment has paid off handsomely."



### I DIDN'T KNOW THAT

So, you think you know the history of Peabody, lets see.  
We'll start with some easy ones.

DID YOU KNOW - That Peabody is the fifth name this area has had since 1626. They are Brooksby, in 1710 the Middle Precinct of Salem, in 1752 Danvers, in 1855 South Danvers and in 1868 Peabody.

- That in 1868 the town voted to change the name in honor of George Peabody, an international banker and philanthropist who was born here.

- That at high tide it was possible to sail a small boat up the North River as far as the Peabody Square area.

- That Peabody Square was once a large mill pond.

- That chocolate was manufactured on Foster Street by General Gideon Foster in the 1700's.

- That in the early 1900's Peabody was involved in the early development of the automobile industry.

- That City Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- That Rufus Sargent is the architect of City Hall, the Sutton House, West (Kiley) School and the Sutton Room extension of the Library.

- That with the adoption of the Massachusetts Constitution in 1789 twenty five slaves were freed in the Peabody - Danvers area and that Sibyl Swinerton was the last survivor of the twenty five dying in 1863.

- That some of the early industries were glass manufacturing, soap manufacturing and pottery making.

- That the North Shore Shopping Center is built on the site of Oak Hill Estate and that the front door and frame were designed by Samuel McIntire and that this door and four columns are incorporated into the design of the Jordan Marsh Company building.

If you knew all of these little bits of information you truly know your Peabody history and should go to the head of the class. If your did not know any of this information or you would like to know more, please come to the Reference Room we'll be happy to help you read more about it.

Patricia A. Woodman  
Reference Aide





# CITY OF PEABODY

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### CENTENNIAL PARK AT PEABODY

#### SUMMARY FACT SHEET

- 307 acres on Route 128 in Peabody, Massachusetts
- Sold or under agreement to 20 firms or tenants in the high tech, manufacturing, wholesale distribution, health service, banking, advertising fields (see attached table for specific listing)
- Presently 1,268,800 s.f. of industrial and office under construction. Total by 1987 of 2,063,800 s.f. Construction value of approximately \$100 million.
- Present number of jobs - 3000; Total jobs by 1990 estimated at 7,500.
- Fifteen million dollars in UDAG's to five firms - S. S. Pierce, Analogic, Avnet, Daly, Combined Properties.
- Nine million dollars of local funds for roadways and utilities



Peabody Time Line 1626 -

1626

Brooksby

Village

Est.

(part of  
Salem)

1634

Grist mill

Captain William  
Trask

early glass  
artifacts

1638

Downing Farm

est.

1658

Quaker

persecution

1708

Katherine

Daland, 1st  
teacher  
-oldest private  
school-

in home of Jane  
Holten, Prospect  
Street.

1710

Middle

Precinct  
formed.

First church-

South

Congregational.

1714

First school  
est.

1752

Danvers  
separates from  
Salem.

Brooksby is now  
So. Danvers.

1765

Gun Powder  
House  
Opposition to  
Stamp Act.

1766

Center School  
est.

1770

Town votes  
not to drink  
tea.



1775

Battle of  
Lexington;

5 slain

1808

Glue industries  
start

1812 - 1818

War

1830

Boot and shoe  
industries  
start

1831

First post office  
est.

1833

President  
Jackson  
visits

1835

Lexington  
Monument  
dedicated

1841

Felton School  
District #6

1843

Conflagration  
in  
Peabody Square  
(Fire)

1845

First newspaper  
published

1847

First railroad  
opened

1850

First high  
school named  
for George  
Peabody





<u>1852</u>	Centennial Celebration of Danvers	<u>1854</u>	Peabody Institute Library est.	<u>1855</u>	Town of South Danvers formed	<u>1856</u>	Parade and Reception for George Peabody	<u>1861 - 1865</u>	Civil War	<u>1868</u>	South Danvers becomes town of Peabody  Sutton Room dedicated, Peabody Inst. Library
<u>1881-</u>	Civil War Monument dedicated	<u>1883</u>	Town/City Hall dedicated	<u>1888</u>	First electric lights	<u>1891</u>	Municipal Light plant est.	<u>1896</u>	Peabody Historical Society founded by Mrs. Lyman Osborn	<u>1903 - 1905</u>	Peabody pioneers in auto industry





<u>1915</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1917</u>	<u>1918</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1920</u>
Pop. 18,625	Nov. 7 vote: 1,170 to 1,115 to accept Plan B City Charter	Distr. Court est.	Influenza epidemic, schools & public places closed; 8 deaths a day	Peabody recognized as world's largest producer of leather	pop. 19,552
2nd largest town in Massachusetts				- Armistice Day	7,095 pop. foreign born
Town Meeting (Form of Gov't)	Dec. 19 (only men voted)		.....	- 1,062 Peabody citizens in WWI	
"booming" leather industry	Samuel H. Donnell elected Mayor		1,060 arrested	- 26 died	
John E. Keefe, Library Director	92% of pop. voted to remain "dry"		1,009 women for doing shimmy dance in public.		
	219 Retail Stores: 71 groceries 37 variety 11 drug stores 25 shoe repairers 6 furniture 6 bakeries				
	Roast Beef 22¢ lb. silk tie 29¢				
	public transportation: electric trolley & "jitneys"				



1921

Peabody Tanners  
win state  
football  
championship

1924

Peabody  
Times  
established

1925

Mayor:  
Robert A.  
Bakeman

Peabody Garden  
Club est.

1930

Eastman  
Gelatine  
establishes  
factory.  
pop. 21,354

1933

Fire  
Amdur-  
Limon  
leather factory

1935

Mayor:  
James E. McVann

1936

Library Director  
Nathan F.  
Masterson

1937

Electric trolley  
service ends  
Bus service  
begins

1938

Tanners win  
state football  
championship

1939

Mayor Joseph B.  
O'Keefe

1940

Passenger rail-  
road service  
ends  
pop. 21,711

1941

25th  
Anniversary of  
City  
largest parade  
in Essex County





1944

Tanners win  
state football  
championship

1945

Tanners win  
state football  
championship

World War II  
ends

3,000 served  
81 died

1946

Mayor: Leo F. McGrath  
1st dog con- stable

1947

Auto racing track  
built in  
West Peabody

1950

Pop. 22,972  
113 Firms  
285 Retail  
18 Wholesale

1951

Peabody Little  
League founded

1954

Flood, Peabody  
Center

19.55

Korean War ends  
5 died

1957

West Peabody  
Garden Club  
established

1958

Official Dedication:  
North Shore  
Shopping Center

1960

Pop: 32,302

1961

West Peabody  
Branch Library  
opens



<u>1962</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
Mayor: Edward T. Meaney	50th Anniversary City of Peabody	Red Sox win pennant: Dick Williams, General Manager, Peabody resident	Mayor: Nicholas Mavroules  Peabody Centennial Celebration	Tanners win state football championship	Pop: 47,650 (4,346 foreign born)  6 piggeries 2,000 pigs
<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>
Peabody Vet. Mem. High School built	Library Director Thomas Scully	Vietnam War ends  13 died	City purchases Brooksby Farm  Third largest city in Essex County	District Court of Peabody - new courthouse  February blizzard largest in Mass.	Mayor:  Peter Torigian





<u>1980</u>	Pop: 45,760	<u>1982</u>	Centennial Park created (316 acres)	<u>1986</u>	Library Director: Mary Ann Tricarico	<u>1989</u>	George Peabody House Civic Center opens	<u>1990</u>	Downtown Partnership: Peabody Square revitalization  New West Branch Library opens  Pop: 48,832  Tanners win Football Superbowl Div. 1	<u>1991</u>	Persian Gulf War 70 served  75th Anniversary Jubilee of City of Peabody  Peabody Community Life Center  November
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<u>1992</u>	Leather City Common Dedicated	<u>1993</u>	Tanners win Football Superbowl Division 1	<u>1994</u>	Pop. 46,740	<u>1995</u>	George Peabody Bicentenary
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